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possible indication of his abstract functioning; though one might well question his assertion about Kubla's "creating a symbolic universal panorama of existence".

Finally, I would like to return for a moment to Bodkin's discussion of caverns. In this respect, too, she appears to display an inclination for abstract functioning, by having recourse to such ultimate abstractions as *cold*, *dark*, or at least such thing-free qualities as *stagnant air*.

Alliteration, Onomatopoeia and Decision Style

There is general consent that the appeal of "Kubla Khan" is intimately related to its music. This music consists in rhythmic structure, rhymes, and sound patterns called alliteration and assonance. In Chapter 2 I will discuss at some length the hypnotic effect of the poem's rhythm and its interaction with rhyme scheme, alliteration and assonance. Here I will confine myself to alliteration and assonance in themselves. In this section I will briefly explore the sound patterns of poetry from three vantage points: EXPERIMENTAL PHONETICS, GESTALT THEORY, and STRUCTURALIST MODELS of the relationship between sound and meaning. Then I will compare, in light of the theory expounded in the present chapter, the different ways in which two critics handle the sound patterns in "Kubla Khan". I will also set forth a rudimentary account of ALTERNATIVE MENTAL PERFORMANCES of sound patterns.

EXPERIMENTAL PHONETICS. The sound dimension of poetry is something of an embarrassment for many critics who seek relief in rapid closure by shifting attention from sound to meaning. In ordinary language we use words for a variety of functions most of which rely on their meaning, conveying information that performs some speech act, or relieves ignorance. In most instances the phonetic component is merely a vehicle for transmitting meanings. Consequently, language-users are programmed to move on from speech sounds to meanings as fast as possible. In poetic language, by contrast, rhyme, metre, and alliteration force us to linger for longer at the sound stratum than in ordinary language. Psychologically, one "comes to a rest" only when reaching the meaning. Any delay in the transition generates uncertainty.

Words have, then, a phonetic-phonological¹⁰ component (speech sounds), and a semantic component (meaning). Words are transmitted by acoustic information and immediately recoded into strings of phonetic units which, in turn, are immediately recoded into semantic units. Nevertheless, there is experimental evidence that *some* subliminal sensory information *is* available in speech perception, facilitating certain verbal memory tasks as well as

¹⁰ For our purpose we need not distinguish between phonetics and phonology. But M.A.K. Halliday's distinction may be illuminating: If speech is organised noise, phonetics investigates the noise, phonology investigates its organisation.

generating expressive and imitating potentials of the speech sounds. Under certain conditions this sensory information is amplified; and under others it is inhibited. "Lateral inhibition" designates certain interactions between neural responses in adjacent brain areas. In speech perception, there is lingering auditory information about the most recent arrival. Lateral inhibition occurs when newer arrivals damage information that otherwise remains available in sensory form, following auditory presentation.

Elsewhere I explore this aspect of the perception of alliteration at considerable length, quoting *inter alia* personal communications from Bruno Repp of the Haskins Laboratories and Robert G. Crowder of Yale University. Repp asserts that "if a subsequent stimulus [...] is very similar to the preceding stimulus, it may generate an enhanced response, because of integration with the previous response; if it [...] is moderately similar, it will be reduced; if it falls outside that area, it will be unaffected" (Tsur, 1992b: 37-38). Crowder suggests that "the lateral inhibition model specifically includes the possibility that if the two sounds residing together in auditory memory are close enough to one another, acoustically, their effect will combine rather than engage in inhibition. There would be precedent for the assumption that the total effect would be the larger for having had a repeated sound" (Tsur, 1992b: 38). This may account for the enhanced effect of speech sounds in rhyme and alliteration.

GESTALT THEORY. Gestalt theory predicts that in poetic prosody such amplification of the acoustic effect is "double-edged": it may have opposing results, depending on its placement within the rhythmic gestalt. When the repeated sounds occur in consecutive (weak and strong) positions (as in "five miles" or "miles meandering", or "from far"), they tend to blur the contrast between prominent and non-prominent events; the amplified acoustic impact enhances this blurring activity. When they occur in stressed syllables in strong positions (with one or more intervening positions), they drastically improve the gestalt, by enhancing the contrast between prominent and non-prominent events.

STRUCTURALIST MODELS. Structuralist criticism has explored the principles that govern the meaning of sound patterns in poetry. In two classical papers on the issue Benjamin Hrushovski (1968; 1980) claims that much of the dispute whether sound can or cannot be expressive comes to a dead end because the issue is treated as if it were one phenomenon. "As a matter of fact, there are several kinds of relations between sound and meaning, and in each kind the problem is revealed in different forms" (1968: 412). He discusses four kinds of such relations: a. Onomatopoeia; b. Expressive Sounds; c. Focusing Sound Pattern; d. Neutral Sound Patterns (I have further elaborated Hrushovski's conception at great length [Tsur, 1992b; 2001]). Onomatopoeia is the most obtrusive of the four types, and also the most marginal one in poetry.

From the point of view of the issue discussed in the present chapter we may observe that the four possibilities demand less or more delayed closure,

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exerting lesser or greater pressure on one's tolerance of uncertainty. Onomatopoeia allows the most rapid closure: it allows the most direct transition from speech sounds to the "imitated" meanings. In onomatopoeia the language-user detects some resemblance between recurring phonetic features in a stretch of language and certain natural noises to which the words may refer. In an expressive sound pattern closure must be delayed for considerably longer, for two different reasons. First, because it requires more complex processing: "a sound combination is grasped as expressive of the tone, mood or some general quality of meaning. Here, an abstraction from the sound pattern (i.e. some kind of tone or "quality" of the sounds) is parallel to an abstraction from the meaning of the words (tone, mood etc.)" (Hrushovski, 1968: 444). Second, while the meaning component of the words in onomatopoeia may designate palpable objects or events, in expressive sound patterns one must abstract an evasive mood or tone or quality from them. Eventually, in expressive sound patterns one must settle on an evasive mood or tone or quality, not a solid object or categorisable event. Likewise, in neutral sound patterns one must remain with an aesthetic function as target, not anchored in some solid object or substantial event; in fact, not anchored in any meaning at all. In what follows, I will compare the handling of sound patterns by two critics, one who displays great tolerance of meaningless sound patterns blurring each other, and one who goes out of his way to force unwarranted meanings upon those sound patterns.

Elizabeth Schneider treats the sound patterns of "Kubla Khan" as belonging to the latter, "neutral" category. This she does in a way that exerts the greatest demand on one's tolerance of ambiguity. Consider the following paragraph, with the ensuing diagram: "The opening line, 'In Xa'nadu' did Ku'bla Kha'n', receives its primary shape from the inclosed assonance of its four stresses, a—u—u—a, which swings the sound as if in a shallow curve, the symmetry being still further marked by the full rhyme of the inclosing syllables, *Xan-* and *Khan* (Coleridge undoubtedly pronounced *Khan* as it was often spelled, *Can*) and the embellishment of minor echoes, *d*'s and short *i*'s binding together the first part and *k*'s the end of the line" (Schneider, 1975: 274):

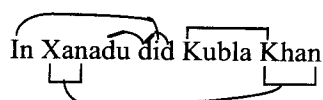


Figure 1 Sound patterns of the first line (re-drawn from Schneider)

Schneider attributes no meaning to these sound patterns. Rather, she finds certain regularities in them and points at certain organising effects these patterns have. I will not quote here all her examples; for brevity's sake, I will just reproduce an adaptation of her second diagram, reflecting the rich and interwoven network of sound patterns in the first stanza (ibid., 275):

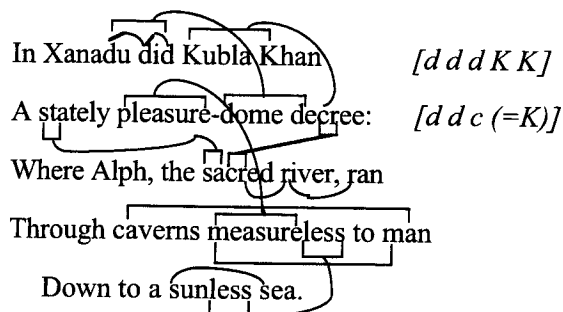


Figure 2 Sound patterns of the first stanza (adapted from Schneider)

Now consider Schneider's following passage: "The tune and variations to be played upon the α -sound are established by the first sentence, in which three of the five lines begin and end with stresses upon it. But this effect is overlaid or interwoven with an elaboration so intricate that one could scarcely point to its mate in English poetry if we except the more subtle harmonies of Milton and Bridges" (Schneider, 1975: 275). She refers here to a poetic quality that severely tests the critic's abilities. First, we have no appropriate metalanguage to describe the quality (only the patterns that generate it). Second, it strains the reader's tolerance of ambiguity to the utmost. Being arrested at the *meaningless* speech sounds ("Neutral Sound Patterns") of a poem makes, by itself, great demands on one's tolerance of uncertainty. If this is not enough, Schneider increases the strain on one's intolerance of ambiguity by treating sound patterns as blurring each other. The perception of this quality presupposes the perception of a thick texture of interwoven sound patterns which blur each other, render each other "ambiguous"—in the sense of vague, indistinct.¹¹ Such a texture may be intolerable for a person for whom "the unique, unclassifiable sensation is particularly offensive", to use Ohmann's phrase above. As we shall see in the next chapter, such blurring may make a decisive contribution to the hypnotic effect of the poem.

It is impossible to do justice here to all the subtleties of Schneider's discussion. Let us just discuss one more passage in which she dwells on another aspect of the phonetic texture in which, too, the distinct perception of the speech sounds is considerably reduced, contributing to what she describes as a "floating effect":

¹¹ Roman Jakobson (1956: 371–372) explores the sophisticated network of sound patterns in the last stanza of Edgar Allan Poe's "The Raven" but makes no reference to their relative distinctness. Poe's "The Raven" and "Ulalume" are paradigmatic instances of "hypnotic" or "spell-weaving" poetry. Jakobson is interested in those sound patterns only as features that distinguish the poetic function of language from other functions, not as features that distinguish hypnotic from non-hypnotic poetry.

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Often throughout the poem he repeats his old device of foreshadowing the terminal rhyme by a preceding echo of assonance or alliteration—"sinuous rills," "chasm which slanted," "ceaseless turmoil seething," "mazy motion," "river ran" and "measureless to man" each used a second time, "from far," "mingled measure," "loud and long."¹² This device, used skilfully as it is here and partly concealed by the interlacing of other patterns, contributes something to the floating effect of the whole, for the assonance softens the impact of the rhyme and so lessens its tendency to bring the line to earth at the close: the terminal rhyme does not settle so heavily upon the mind when its emphasis has been partly stolen by its preceding shadow. The forward movement is made to pause and "oscillate" further at times by the considerable number of lines in which the meaning looks forward while the rhyme looks back (Schneider, 1975: 276).

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ALTERNATIVE MENTAL PERFORMANCES. Schneider is one of the few literary critics who does not merely acknowledge the presence of rich sound patterns, but also distinguishes between relatively foregrounded and relatively backgrounded sound patterns. Furthermore, she does not do this impressionistically, but gives a structural description of the phenomenon. Since there is no appropriate metalanguage for this, she describes the various linguistic aspects that point attention in conflicting directions. I have, however, doubts as to her use of this specific type of alliteration. These concern the assertion that in the above instances the "emphasis [of rhyme] has been partly stolen by its preceding shadow". While I appreciate this kind of description very much, I believe there is evidence that the "preceding shadow" enhances rather than weakens the acoustic traces of the rhyme word. Obviously, we receive our impressions from different mental performances.

In the above paragraph, Schneider provides us with a detailed description of the elements of the mental performance in which "the terminal rhyme does not settle so heavily upon the mind". I will argue that the suggested quality does not arise universally but only in certain specifiable performances. Consequently, this indicative sentence must not be understood as a factual statement, but rather as a "crucial recommendation" how to perform the text. I opt for a slightly different mental performance of these sound patterns, one in which the

¹² All the sound patterns mentioned in this passage involve continuous (as opposed to abrupt) speech sounds, all but one pair being periodic (vowels, liquids and nasals). According to the received view, these are the most musical, the most harmonious speech sounds. Elsewhere I argued (Tsur, 1992b) that these speech sounds derive their musicality from their periodicity on the one hand, and, on the other, from the fact that the greatest amount of pre-categorical sensory information is available to consciousness in precisely these speech sounds. According to Snyder (1930: 51-52), it is precisely these speech sounds that are especially prominent in hypnotic poetry, so as "to satisfy and soothe the ear".

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repeated sound in such phrases as "mazy motion" or "mingled measure" enhance each other's acoustic traces rather than blur them. This reflects my intuitions and also follows from the models of "lateral inhibition" and Gestalt Theory mentioned above. The repeated word-initial sounds in each phrase are sufficiently similar to acoustically augment each other; and they occur in stressed syllables in strong positions, with an intervening unstressed syllable in a weak position, achieving a sense of considerable stability at the close.

I perfectly agree with a reading in which sound patterns have different weights; I also commend Schneider's technique of pointing out the divided attention that involves forward-looking and backward-looking linguistic aspects; but I rely on *other* devices by which attention is divided. One basic assumption of gestalt theory is that elements may change their nature when entering into a wider context. Consider, for instance, "miles meandering . . . mazy motion". In my reading, the last two words form an exceptionally strong gestalt, "settling quite heavily upon the mind", or closing the line "with a click"; but it is the preceding two words that mitigate this pattern, by weakening the gestalt.

Let me spell out the perceptual dynamics involved. In such phrases as "river ran", "measureless to man", "mingled measure," "loud and long", the repeated word-initial sounds occur in stressed syllables in strong positions (with one or more intervening positions), reinforcing, as I said, the contrast between prominent and nonprominent events. It is the second token of the same consonant that turns the first token into part of a sound pattern, after the event: the two form a closed, symmetrical, "strong" unit. In a longer sequence of repeated consonants, by contrast, as in "miles meandering . . . mazy motion", the *m*'s become part of an endlessly repeatable pattern which has no self-generated end. Moreover, in "miles meandering" the repeated *m* occurs in consecutive positions, strong and weak. Such a sequence has a considerably weakened gestalt.

The very fact, however, that Schneider adopts a mental performance that leads to the perception of some blurred sound texture gives us additional evidence of her exceptionally high tolerance of ambiguity—irrespective of whether I agree with her analysis or not.

Certain poetic effects (perhaps all) crucially depend on the "mental performance" in which they arise (more on this in Chapter 3 and the Afterword). When there is unanimity as to the poetic qualities of a text, mental or vocal performance usually go unnoticed; but when different poetic qualities are reported by different readers, one should look for differences in vocal or mental performances (Part Three of this book is devoted to vocal performance). I have used, with reference to sound qualities, the near-vacuous phrase "Schneider's mental performance". I have access to my own mental performance, but not to Schneider's. As long as I don't specify the mental performance, the term is vacuous. Now I propose to fill this phrase with some content. What kind of

mental performance may yield perception? I wish to propose two possible kinds. The first principle (which we have already encountered in communications) concerns lateral inhibition: lingering auditory information ("if it is too similar, it will be reduced"). The phrase "river ran" would be an obvious example; in music, the *fr* sound cluster would not be noticed at all: the *fr* sound cluster in the first two words to inhibit mutual enhancement. In speech, it moderated the similarity of some pairs of words to reduce the resonance of their acoustic energy.

Since Schneider's discussion of "river ran" is rather than reduced response to resonance, I propose an alternative possibility, based on two principles we have also encountered already) concerns change their nature when entering into a wider context. "river ran" and "measureless to man" alliterations contribute to a clear-cut, strong gestalt, typically marked by separate intonation, but, however, they direct attention away from "ran - man" to the similarity of the *m* in "measureless to man". In Schneider's reading, "river ran" does not settle so heavily upon the mind as "measureless to man" stolen by its preceding shadow. The first *m* 'oscillate' further at times by the contrast between the meaning looks forward while the rhythm looks back. The *m* part of two different sound patterns. The *m* in "river ran" in. As will be argued in the Afterword, the interaction of and overtone interaction in music are inhibited *across* them. In speech perception, there is a tendency to perceive certain rhythmic contours, but not *across* contour boundaries. The perceptual corollaries of such split attention are performance in which the line ending is not intonation. The resulting interaction would generate an intense and diffuse feeling. This is deliberately called for in the first occurrence of "to man"; but may, perhaps, be adapted to line endings are clearly articulated by the *m* likely to contribute a feeling to this arrangement with a "click". Schneider seems to assume the interaction of crisscrossing sensory information in sound patterns "partly concealed by

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mental performance may yield perceptions like the one reported by Schneider? I wish to propose two possible kinds, based on three cognitive principles. One principle (which we have already encountered in Repp's and Crowder's communications) concerns lateral inhibition in the neural system, reducing lingering auditory information ("if the subsequent stimulus is moderately similar, it will be reduced"). The phrase "from far" (pointed out by Schneider) would be an obvious example; in most performances the alliteration would not be noticed at all: the *fr* sound cluster would be sufficiently dissimilar in the two words to inhibit mutual enhancement. Accordingly, Schneider may have moderated the similarity of some pairs of words in her performance so as to reduce the resonance of their acoustic energy.

Since Schneider's discussion of the sound texture presupposes increased rather than reduced response to resounding sensory information, I prefer an alternative possibility, based on two further principles. One principle (which we have also encountered already) is the gestalt assumption that elements change their nature when entering into a wider context. Consider the phrases "river ran" and "measureless to man" in their second occurrence. These alliterations contribute to a clear-cut, enhanced articulation of the line ending, typically marked by separate intonation contours. By the same token, however, they direct attention away from the similarity of the rhyme words "ran - man" to the similarity of their initial phonemes ("river ran" and "measureless to man"). In Schneider's cogent formulation, "the terminal rhyme does not settle so heavily upon the mind when its emphasis has been partly stolen by its preceding shadow. The forward movement is made to pause and 'oscillate' further at times by the considerable number of lines in which the meaning looks forward while the rhyme looks back". The rhyme words become part of two different sound patterns. This is where the other principle comes in. As will be argued in the Afterword, colour interaction in visual perception and overtone interaction in music are enhanced *within* gestalt boundaries, but inhibited *across* them. In speech perception there is experimental evidence for a tendency to perceive certain rhythmic phenomena as active *within* intonation contours, but not *across* contour boundaries. It seems quite plausible that the perceptual corollaries of such split attention may effectively interact only in a performance in which the line endings are not articulated too clearly by intonation. The resulting interaction of precategorical sensory information would generate an intense and diffuse gestalt-free texture. Such a performance is deliberately called for in the first occurrence of "river, ran" and "measureless to man"; but may, perhaps, be adapted to their second occurrence too. When line endings are clearly articulated by intonation, such alliterative patterns are likely to contribute a feeling to this articulation that the line has been closed with a "click". Schneider seems to assume less clearly closed verse lines, and an interaction of crisscrossing sensory information between the lines, which result in sound patterns "partly concealed by the interlacing of other patterns".

When I was preparing the present, enlarged edition of this book, I stumbled upon a recent book on "Kubla Khan" (Fleissner, 2000) that offers extensive discussions of sound patterns. I have thus been able to compare the way he and Schneider handle them, obtaining useful information and insight into the implied critic's decision style. Fleissner was well acquainted with Schneider's book quoting it fourteen times (he also lists the first edition of the present book in his bibliography, but does not quote it). Not surprisingly, there is some overlap between the two books on this issue. The more conspicuous, therefore, becomes the fact that in most respects their approaches are diametrically opposed.

Fleissner handles the sound patterns of "Kubla Khan" very differently. To be sure, as I said, there are some overlaps between the treatments of these two critics. First, it is not surprising that on the observational level they point out roughly the same sound patterns. This is inevitable in describing the same poem. Second, the following passage is undoubtedly compatible with Schneider's position, perhaps influenced by it (though less clearly articulated):

measureless to man. The most obvious effect of this pleasant, harmonious phrase is the alliteration of the *m* sound, which then relates to the extensive alliteration in the first five lines of the poem itself, thus forming a kind of structural unit:

Kubla Khan
-dome decree
river, ran
measureless . . . man
sunless sea (ibid., 14)

But then Fleissner brings the repeated sound pattern under the control of meaning:

What is especially apropos is the use of the *m* sound for describing the caverns onomatopoeically.

That is puzzling. I know what kind of sound the "murmuring of innumerable bees", for instance, or "the silken, sad, uncertain / rustling of each purple curtain" may have, but I don't know what kind of sound a cave has, or a cabbage, for that matter. But Fleissner does know:

It suggests that something deep, remote, and sunken is in the caves—even as the sound-effect *BOUM* describes the echo in Forster's Marabar Caves. That sound-effect suggests not only what is incidentally non-human, but it happens to connote the Hindu word for God, *OM*, even as *measureless to man* conveys a similar anagogic effect. Phonologically, both expressions point to the notion of infinity. The "infinite" phrase is echoed later in

the poem ("reached stress the import of use of alliteration a before: "miles mean

All this is ad hoc and principled. Fleissner does sound patterns, but cannot meaning to them. Moreover which he assigned those m not implied by, the poem, association with another t with "the Hindu word for topoeia. And I cannot figur point to the notion of infin motion". What is the typic deliberate intention, Flei contrast, the absence of suc

Comparable to the f innumerable bees," C itive surety (ibid., 15

As I have said before, I merable bees" may have. I such murmuring can be re also explain that, as I. A. R beeves" there is no onomat at very great length; see T provided). Tennyson's lin times: twice in *murmuring* contains it only twice. Tha poeia. Nevertheless, it dis *murdering* and *beeves* do cluster, whereas that of *mu* claim that the alliteration hecatomb. The rule appear phonetic features cannot "c least strongly implied by, tures of speech sounds may text, events that contain similarity to them.

Or consider the following

ion of this book, I stumbled (2000) that offers extensive material to compare the way he writes and insight into the background of Schneider's first edition of the present work. Not surprisingly, there is a clear difference. The more conspicuous, the more they approach are "Khan" very differently. To compare the treatments of these two on a theoretical level they point out the difference in describing the same thing, clearly compatible with Schneider's (clearly articulated):

of this pleasant, harmonious which then relates to the extent of the poem itself, thus forming a

pattern under the control of

m sound for describing the

the "murmuring of innumerable / rustling of each purple of sound a cave has, or a

unknown is in the caves—even in Forster's Marabar Caves. incidentally non-human, but it is *OM*, even as *measureless to* phonologically, both expressions " phrase is echoed later in

the poem ("reached the caverns measureless to man"), thus serving to stress the import of the sound effect. Comparable is the extended double use of alliteration and onomatopoeia in the repetition of the *m* shortly before: "miles meandering . . . mazy motion" (ibid., 14-15).

All this is ad hoc and the result of unbridled free association, nothing principled. Fleissner does assign a proper description to some of Coleridge's sound patterns, but cannot refrain from attributing a conspicuously arbitrary meaning to them. Moreover, he cannot point out the principle according to which he assigned those meanings. The word *BOUM* does not occur in, and is not implied by, the poem, but is smuggled in through the backdoor, by way of association with another text. Even if we grant the unwarranted association with "the Hindu word for God, *OM*", this has nothing to do with onomatopoeia. And I cannot figure out how can "phonologically, both expressions point to the notion of infinity", nor how the phoneme *m* can imitate a "mazy motion". What is the typical sound of infinity or of mazy motion? *Pace* his deliberate intention, Fleissner's ensuing sentence points up, by way of contrast, the absence of such a principle:

Comparable to the familiar Tennysonian expression "And murmuring of innumerable bees," Coleridge's use of the *m* device was effected with intuitive surety (ibid., 15).

As I have said before, I have an idea what sound the "murmuring of innumerable bees" may have. I may also assume that there are principles by which such murmuring can be related to speech sounds. The same principles must also explain that, as I. A. Richards suggested, in the "murdering of innumerable beebes" there is no onomatopoeia (I have elsewhere discussed those principles at very great length; see Tsur, 1992b; 2001; in the latter, sound files, too, are provided). Tennyson's line of verse contains the sound cluster *mər* three times: twice in *murmuring*, and once in *innumerable*. Richards' transcription contains it only twice. That would still suffice for a quite effective onomatopoeia. Nevertheless, it disappears. The semantic component of the words *murdering* and *beebes* does not activate the relevant features of the *mər* cluster, whereas that of *murmuring* and *bees* does. It would be illegitimate to claim that the alliteration indicates that the beebes were *mooring* during the hecatomb. The rule appears to be this: even in straightforward onomatopoeia phonetic features cannot "conjure up" objects or events not mentioned in, or at least strongly implied by, the text. Conversely rather, dormant phonetic features of speech sounds may be activated by events explicitly mentioned in the text, events that contain auditory features that bear sufficient perceptual similarity to them.

Or consider the following example from Fleissner:

woman wailing for her demon-lover. The alliterative use of the *w* here (woman, wailing, waning) is noteworthy in that it is also onomatopoeic. Let us infer that, among other ghoulish things, the phrase summons up nothing less than the ululations of the she-wolf (ibid., 29).

Here, again, Fleissner anchors the meaningless sound patterns in an arbitrarily introduced concrete image, "the ululations of the she-wolf". There seem to be no constraints on Fleissner's stream of consciousness. Even supposing that the repeated speech sound *w* does have the appropriate phonetic features, these can be activated by *wailing*, but cannot conjure up a she-wolf, or its ululation.

One of Agnon's characters says of her husband that "he is fond of making assumptions, regarding them as certainties". One of the characteristics of concrete functioning is an inclination to introduce unmentioned concrete elements into a text and to regard them as certainly present. As we have seen, the elements introduced into a text by way of interpretation must be of a considerably high level of abstraction, and must be regarded not as facts, but as "merely possible". In this respect, Fleissner's "ululations of the she-wolf" and "the sound-effect *BOUM*" are comparable to Fruman's "the woman wailing for her demon-lover is calling for an incestuous lover", or Yarlott's assumption that her wailing may reach the Khan's ears (see Chapter 2); or Watson's assertion that "'Kubla Khan' is about two kinds of poem". This is the case even regarding Fleissner's comment on *sunless sea*. "Again an onomatopoeic meaning dominates: continuity of sibilants suggests the surge of the sea". As I said, the presence of certain phonetic features cannot conjure up an unmentioned object or event. The sibilants are, indeed, there; and they may certainly serve as imitation of all sorts of noises, as in Poe's "And the silken, sad, uncertain / rustling". The only trouble is that Coleridge's phrase refers to a conspicuously visual state, not to the noise made by the sea. The "surge of the sea" is introduced here gratuitously. This is clearly indicated by the first stanza by itself. But if anyone has doubts about this, the suggestion that it is a "lifeless ocean" must convince him. This is an exquisite instance of what Harvey described (see above) as "a greater insensitivity to subtle and minimal cues and hence a greater susceptibility to false but obtrusive cues".

Throughout the present book I have pointed out evidence for Schneider's high degree of Negative Capability; her handling of alliteration and assonance in "Kubla Khan" is just one more instance of this. I have not devoted comparable attention to Fleissner's book. But his discussion of onomatopoeia is embedded in a book that displays a persistent attitude of a Quest for Certitude (cf. Chapter 2, note 5). One important assumption of the "implied critic's decision style" theory is that the avoidance of certain critical solutions does not necessarily result from the critic's decision style; it may be due also to an unsatisfactory conceptual system. If a critic avoids certain critical tools, he may simply be unaware of their existence. In Fleissner's case, we have

evidence that he *was* exposed to a radically different way of thinking, good enough.

"Kubla Khan" and Depth

This poem is a depth-psychic experience written in an opium dream. The Reverie (according to the manuscript) surely bears the same relation to Coleridge himself as the poem bears to him. It is, in fact, far from the Author's own curiosity, than on the ground of a, indeed, quite a few depth-psychic experiences we shall consider and compare. This is preliminary to this discussion of whom we have already met.

Supposing Freud right, the unconscious in human action, though it must underlie all poetic activity, is not a poem. The psychoanalytic clarity, is to make known several activities he has done in the work of literature as well as the other hand, he has done particular literary work. The avoid is that of mistake. It is always in human experience. One might write an interesting romantic poets, providing ains and caverns than any other. How this kind of interest can show something not present in other cases.

I have already suggested that Negative Capability, both in what she has said in preceding critics. The above, in the first place, this is one of the (sarcastic) remarks against symbolist the belief that one cannot open up. I suggested earlier, symbolist's ignorance and uncertainty in

illiterative use of the *w* here that it is also onomatopoeic. In *Walden*, the phrase summons up *w* (ibid., 29).

ess sound patterns in an ons of the she-wolf". There n of consciousness. Even have the appropriate pho- ut cannot conjure up a she-

that "he is fond of making f the characteristics of con- entioned concrete elements nt. As we have seen, the tion must be of a consider- not as facts, but as "merely of the she-wolf" and "the the woman wailing for her Yarlott's assumption that r 2); or Watson's assertion is is the case even regard- in onomatopoeic meaning of the sea". As I said, the up an unmentioned object y may certainly serve as he silken, sad, uncertain / e refers to a conspicuously he "surge of the sea" is ted by the first stanza by gession that it is a "lifeless instance of what Harvey btle and minimal cues and es".

evidence for Schneider's literation and assonance in e not devoted comparable nomatopoeia is embedded Quest for Certitude (cf. "implied critic's decision itical solutions does not it may be due also to an certain critical tools, he eissner's case, we have

evidence that he *was* exposed to Schneider's treatment of sound patterns. If he offered a radically different one, he may have believed that Schneider's was not good enough.

"Kubla Khan" and Depth-Psychological Interpretation

This poem is a depth-psychologist's paradise. A poem purported to have been written in an opium dream (according to the 1816 preface), or in a state of Reverie (according to the more recently discovered Crewe holograph manuscript) surely bears the signs of its origin in the unconscious. Does not Coleridge himself testify in the preface that this fragment was published, "as far as the Author's own opinions are concerned, rather as a psychological curiosity, than on the ground of any supposed *poetic* merits"? And there are, indeed, quite a few depth-psychological interpretations of this poem, of which we shall consider and compare two (one Freudian and the other Jungian). As a preliminary to this discussion, we shall consider two caveats, by two critics whom we have already met. The first one is by Schneider (1975: 9-10):

Supposing Freud right in finding sexual symbolism to underlie almost all human action, thought and dream—obviously, then, sexual symbolism must underlie all poetry too. That, however, tells us little about any one poem. The psychoanalytical critic's responsibility, in the interest of clarity, is to make known his assumptions and tell his readers which of several activities he is at the moment engaged in: whether he is using a work of literature as a case history to teach us psychology or whether, on the other hand, he is using his psychoanalytic theory to illumine a particular literary work or literary history as a whole. The trap difficult to avoid is that of mistaking what it is one has proved. If rounded mountains always in human experience must mean breasts and caverns always wombs, one might write an illuminating essay on infantilism and regression in romantic poets, provided one can prove that they describe more mountains and caverns than other poets do. [...] In any case, it is difficult to see how this kind of interpretation can throw light on any given poem unless it can show something special in the use of caverns and mountains that is not present in other cavern-mountain poems.

I have already suggested that Schneider gives ample evidence of her Negative Capability, both in what she writes about the text itself, and in her criticism of preceding critics. The above passage is obviously an instance of the latter. In the first place, this is one more instance of Schneider's many (sometimes sarcastic) remarks against symbol-mongering (such as "If one proceeds upon the belief that one cannot open his mouth without being symbolic ...", 260). As I suggested earlier, symbol-mongering may be a preferred means for dispelling ignorance and uncertainty in the service of the Quest for Certitude. In the